

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. AMBASSADOR MORIARTY VISITS RANGPUR

DHAKA, AUGUST 18 – U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty visited Rangpur and Saidpur to participate in the opening of the joint United States-Bangladesh Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) in Taraganj, visit a local madrassa and view a U.S. Government-funded pharmaceutical outlet. During his visit, the Ambassador reaffirmed the U.S. Government's long-term commitment towards the development of Bangladesh.

The Ambassador's trip started with the opening ceremony of the MEDCAP at the Taraganj Regional Clinic. This joint U.S.-Bangladesh humanitarian assistance program will provide free basic medical and dental care to over 10,000 Bangladeshis in the Rangpur District during the 10-day exercise at three clinics in Rangpur. Medical care is provided by the U.S. Navy and Marines Corps, in cooperation with the Bangladesh Army Medical Detachment. The purpose of the exercise is to provide humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh as well as to further enhance the interoperability between the U.S. and Bangladesh militaries. The Ambassador was impressed with the level of care provided by the military doctors, dentists, nurses and medical technicians. He noted that quality of life for thousands of Bangladeshis will be improved through this important program.

Later that day, Ambassador Moriarty visited the Sathgara Baitul Mukarram Kamil Madrassa in Rangpur to meet with students and faculty. This madrassa has consistently been selected by the Bangladesh government as one of the top 10 in the country. The Ambassador and students engaged in a lively discussion on a variety of topics, including the American democratic and electoral process. The Ambassador presented a selection of books and materials on American governance to the madrassa. The U.S. Government continues to support education programs for secondary and higher secondary level madrassa students through the Access English Micro Scholarship Program and also provides training for madrassa teachers and Imams.

Afterwards, Ambassador Moriarty visited a U.S. Government-funded Social Marketing Company (SMC) Blue Star pharmacy today. He met with the service providers and with the clients who came to receive care. Ambassador Moriarty was impressed with the range of products and services offered at the outlet. A typical Blue Star Outlet is a health provider's pharmacy cum service center providing a full range of essential health services and products for community people, including the poorest members of the community. SMC's Blue Star Social Franchising Program is a network of 3,650 community-based private health service providers including trained graduate and non-graduate medical practitioners, nurses, midwives and pharmacists under one brand – Blue Star. A USAID-supported initiative, Blue Star promotes awareness and use of socially beneficial services and products. Blue Star provides family planning counseling and dispenses SMC-branded products, such as contraceptives, priced to be affordable to the poor.

While Ambassador Moriarty was visiting the Blue Star pharmacy, Mrs. Moriarty met with students and faculty at the Rangpur Government College, the largest public school in Rangpur. Mrs. Moriarty and students discussed the upcoming U.S. presidential election. She also presented the college with a set of books about the United States.

The United States Government has provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. The U.S. Government's assistance to Bangladesh includes support for free, fair and credible elections and more transparent and accountable governance; assistance for a better educated, healthier and more productive population; funding to increase economic opportunities through equitable economic growth; food assistance; and support for disaster mitigation.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)